

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

Claim 1 (currently amended): A screw element with a tool engagement element and a spring element which is formed on the screw element in one piece in coaxial relationship with the screw axis and which with its free edge defines a workpiece contact plane which is perpendicular to the screw axis and which is at an axial spacing from the screw element wherein the spring element is mounted at the periphery of the screw element, that is to say a screw head or a screw nut, the spring element projects radially beyond the periphery and forms a workpiece contact which is disposed outside the periphery and which is in concentric relationship with the screw axis, wherein the spring element is adapted to prevent the pre-stressing effect for the screw connection being lost by virtue of changes in length thus ensuring sufficient frictional force to prevent the screw connection becoming unscrewed and

~~wherein the spring element comprises a plurality of radial, claw-like projections which each have at least a respective portion of the workpiece contact.~~

wherein the spring element is a ring which is concentric with respect to the screw axis and which has a workpiece contact which is annular throughout; and

wherein the ring forming the spring element has a plurality of openings distributed uniformly over its periphery.

Claims 2-4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (currently amended): A screw element as set forth in claim [3] 11, wherein three projections are arranged distributed uniformly at the periphery of the screw element.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A screw element as set forth in claim 5, wherein the spring element has a relatively flat spring characteristic.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A screw element as set forth in claim 6, wherein the spring element is of lower hardness than the screw element.

Claim 8 (previously presented): A screw element as set forth in claim 7, wherein the spring element has projections in the region of the workpiece contact.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A screw having a head in the form of the screw element as set forth in claim 8, wherein the screw is of a thread-forming and self-boring nature.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A screw connection between two workpieces of which at least one is a metal plate or a plastic element, with a screw element as set forth in claim 9, wherein only the spring element and it bears with a predetermined prestressing force against the adjoining workpiece.

Claim 11 (new): A screw element as set forth in claim 1, wherein the spring element comprises a plurality of radial, claw-like projections which each have at least a respective portion of the workpiece contact.